

Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Local area technology center opens new education, training facility

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FRANKFORT, Ky. — Hughes Jones - Harrodsburg Area Technology Center (ATC) marked the opening of its 21,000-square-foot addition and extensive renovation of the older facility with a ribbon cutting ceremony Sept. 16. The \$4 million project will accommodate new classrooms, labs, a multi-purpose room and a new pre-engineering program for the Mercer County High School. The school is located on Tapp Road in Harrodsburg

The building and renovation project nearly doubles the facility from 22,000 square feet to 43,000 square feet. The ATC serves high schools in Anderson County, Burgin Independent, and Mercer County as well as the Central Kentucky Christian School in Mercer County. The center currently has about 300 students enrolled, most of which attend half a day, 38 take on-line courses and 27 participate in an off campus "Introduction to Health Sciences" class at Anderson County High School.

Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Secretary Helen W. Mountjoy told the gathering at the ceremony that the project was an example of what working together can accomplish.

"This project was accomplished because of the collaboration of local and state governments and the local school system along with the support of local businesses. Thank you for your efforts to make this project such a success for the communities and especially for the students it will serve," she said.

Mountjoy also said the school represents the changing tide of career and technical education from its traditional vocational roots when it first opened to the modern and highly technical facility it has become.

The addition includes new labs for automotive technology and welding, carpentry and electrical technology classrooms, a multi-purpose room and an academic classroom that will be shared with a math and English teacher from Mercer County High School.

The addition also will feature a new pre-engineering program for Mercer County High School that is focused on preparing students to meet an area industry need for engineers.

Kentucky State Senator Dan Kelly, who represents the district where the school is located, spoke at the ceremony. "It's great to see this expanded structure that will allow more of our youth an opportunity for

technical training. High-tech skills for our youth are essential for their success and the future of our community,” Kelly said.

In the original section of the building, the health sciences area was renovated to mirror a real-life hospital setting and an old auto-tech lab was remodeled to expand the information technology program.

“The programs we have at the school today are very similar to the ones here when the school opened with the exception of our computer-based classes. The difference however, is the technology that surrounds them all now,” said Duane Flora, principal of the ATC and a former student. “It is amazing to see all the technological advances that have taken place over the last 38 years that affect even the traditional trades programs such as welding and carpentry.”

The school, which originally opened in 1970, has had four principals. The ATC was named after Hughes Jones, who had the longest tenure as principal from 1976-2004. Current principal Flora took over for Jones and was also a carpentry instructor from 1988-1999.

Flora said the renovation of the facility represents the support of the local districts that send students to the school and the local business community that is looking for a skilled and qualified workforce to fill their employment needs.

Hughes Jones - Harrodsburg ATC is one of 55 centers in the Office of Career and Technical Education, an agency of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet. The cabinet coordinates learning programs from P-16, and manages and supports training and reemployment functions in the Department for Workforce Investment. For more information about our programs, visit <http://www.educationcabinet.ky.gov/> or <http://www.workforce.ky.gov> or call 502-564-6606.